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THE SEARCH FOR STABILITY: PROVINCIAL
RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS IN AFGHANISTAN

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ABSTRACT

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The need for Nation Building is now widely recognised, but how to do it is not universally agreed. This paper examines how the US institutional mindset against peacekeeping and Nation Building has changed over time with the acceptance that Nation Building is a role for the interagency and international bodies, as well as the military.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams, as employed in Afghanistan, are used as a vehicle to examine the wide range of activities necessary in Nation Building. It differentiates between military, non-military and shared roles, noting how Provincial Reconstruction Teams can achieve the necessary balance. Emphasis is placed on involving the interagency, Inter Governmental Organisations and Non Governmental Organisations and local populous.

The paper concludes that within Afghanistan, Provincial Reconstruction Teams may be an effective way of widening and strengthening the writ of Afghan central government, but that it relies on the existence of a benign and permissive environment at the local level. The role of the military in any Nation Building endeavour is the creation of a safe and secure environment within which other initiatives can come to fruition. A factor of this requirement will be the number of troops committed to this part of the operation.

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> '**They've** been going out and getting a feel for what the area holds in terms of factions, militia forces, police, local government infrastructure and the needs of the people. Soldiers have been reacting to situations, brokering local ceasefires, mediating, reducing tension, monitoring the withdrawal of factional forces, and supervising disarmament programmes.'

—— Maj Guy Bennett[1]

Counter-insurgency is not a new phenomenon and many militaries have engaged in little else since the end of the Second World War. However, counter-insurgency and Nation Building resulting from regime change operations conducted under the overarching Global War On Terrorism (GWOT) presents particular challenges. This paper will examine the military demands of Nation Building and compare them to methods currently being used in Afghanistan to determine whether they have utility in other similar endeavours.

THE INSTITUTIONAL MINDSET

> 'Absolutely not! Our military is meant to fight and win war.'

—— George W. Bush, 3 October 2000[2]

While many nations have embraced peacekeeping operations, the United States military and government have tended not to. To some extent, this is as a result of the Vietnam experience, and in becoming 'fixed' in the Balkans. However, operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq have required US troops to engage in protracted Nation Building operations.

The last US Presidential Decision Directives with a focus on peacekeeping were Number 25[3], of May 1993, and Number 56[4] of May 1997, both issued by President Clinton. Number 25 focused on the scope and conditions for US involvement in multilateral peacekeeping operations. Number 56 dealt with the need for inter-agency co-operation in mounting peacekeeping operations. It was written against a backdrop of operations in Bosnia, and did not envisage the far more complex situations surrounding the need to Nation Build. In 1998, Department of Defence policy was only to peacekeep in permissive environments where, *'in the end the parties have to want to resolve their differences and make the best use of external assistance. If that is not their intention, the prescription for policy is clear – don't send in the peacekeepers'*[5]. While President George W Bush expresses a dislike for open-ended nation building missions involving US troops[6], both his introduction to the National Security Strategy, and Chapter 7 of that document, make reference to the need to support fledgling democracies[7].

Military debate has hinged on the continued relevance of the 'Powell Doctrine', which espouses the use overwhelming force[8] to fight wars. Operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq were mounted in a different way. In Afghanistan, a small number of Special Forces guided and assisted a 'proxy force' of Northern Alliance fighters, achieving results disproportionate to their numbers. In Iraq, a smaller force was used than some believed necessary, and the offensive was launched while the build up of forces was incomplete. These were examples of how a technologically superior force can succeed in Decisive Operations with lower numbers of troops than historical evidence would prescribe[9]. In both cases, however, experience suggests that greater numbers of troops are needed to transition from Decisive to Transition Operations.

FACING REALITIES

> 'There may be some moments when we use our troops as peacekeepers, but not often.'

⸺ George W. Bush, 11 October 2000[10]

GWOT has resulted in two overt operations against failed states accused of fomenting terrorism. This has resulted in a need for regime change and creation of a democratic society. In addition to the military, this has required considerable national assets to be committed to Nation Building (or, semantically, in the case of Iraq, rebuilding). As a result, there is a need to accept Kagan's view that, '*regime change is inextricably intertwined with Nation Building and peacekeeping. Those elements must be factored into any plan from the outset*'[11]. And, *'to effect regime change US forces must be positively in control of the enemy's territory and population'*[12]. It is clear that peacekeeping and positive control are military tasks, while Nation Building is not. Similarly, Senator Robert Torricelli said, '*without some Nation Building, the cycle of poverty to terrorism will be repeated. You can't just separate out some Nation Building from our GWOT. They are part of the same campaign*'[13]. Again, there is a distinction between the military combat role and the involvement of all national assets in Nation Building.

Thus, Nation Building is not an exclusively military activity, and all instruments of national power will have a part to play. However, it is clear that in most situations the military will need to be an integral part of the initial Nation Building effort whether they wish to be or not, not least because they will be actively engaged through combat operations.

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS?

'I would say we tend to do war fighting rather than peace keeping'.

— Defence Secretary Rumsfeldt[14]

The idealist may believe that the military role in Nation Building is to hand over to someone else (whether indigenous forces, the United Nations or another nations forces), and withdraw. The realist will acknowledge that a period of transition will be required to achieve the 'hand off'[15]. The balancing act is in identifying what roles are required of the military and to what extent they should be performed. Numerous articles have appeared citing historical examples of success or failure at Nation Building[16] and works on counter-insurgency have been reread in order to distil the lessons learnt. Unfortunately most tend to spotlight the many differences between historical examples and the circumstances in Afghanistan and Iraq. Major Nagl,[17] an officer currently serving in Iraq takes many of his theoretical lessons from Lawrence of Arabia and Colonel C E Callwell, a 19th Century British officer.[18] While both offer useful insights into insurgency operations they are written against a backdrop of strictly enforced colonial policing. A move to a more 'Hearts and Minds' dominated approach was instituted during the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya during 1952-1960. One of the officers involved in this was General Sir Frank Kitson, a noted British counter-insurgency theorist and practitioner[19]. He offers a 'framework' for developing a successful counter-insurgency campaign plan. He cites the four requirements as[20]:

- Good coordinating machinery
- A political atmosphere within which government measures can be introduced with the maximum likelihood of success
- Intelligence
- Operating within the rule of law.

Carl Bildt, the former Swedish Prime Minister and the international communities first High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina, provides a contemporary view of the demands of Nation Building (or State Building as he calls it). His seven lessons are:[21]

- It is imperative to establish a secure environment very fast.
- The central challenge is not reconstruction, but state building.
- To build a state, you need to know what state to build.
- There must be an early focus on the preconditions for long-term economic growth.
- There has to be a benevolent regional environment.
- The greater the international support, the easier the process.

- Nation Building takes a longer time, and requires more resources, than most initially believe.

A long-term observer of the peacekeeping scene, Colonel William Flavin, has the benefit of making his comments with hindsight after studying the operations in Afghanistan an Iraq[22]. That said, his recipe for successful conflict termination would surprise neither Kitson nor Bildt.

- Conducting early inter-agency planning.
- Establishing workable objectives, goals and end-states.
- Providing for adequate intelligence and signalling.
- Ensuring unity of effort.
- Harmonising the civil with the military effort.
- Establishing the appropriate post-conflict organisation.

What is immediately apparent in a distillation of all these 'principles' is that the various requirements are not all areas in which the military have the main expertise.

THE PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM CONCEPT

After early success in ejecting the Taleban government and their Al Queda 'guests', it was recognised that the pace of reconstitution in Afghanistan was painfully slow. Kabul, prospering under the protection of the International Security Assistance Force and the influx of foreign diplomats, Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGOs) and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), has made significant progress. However, the extremities of the country remained largely ungoverned by Karzai's Afghan Transitional Authority, and they did not see the social, economic and security benefits enjoyed in the capital region. Thus, there was a need to extend the writ of central government to the Provinces. To achieve this, the US military have implemented a concept known as the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to try and establish an effective way to widen Nation Building efforts. A PRT is a relatively small, multi-skilled military led, interagency, and preferably multi-national, group intended to monitor conditions and progress and facilitate, coordinate and deliver humanitarian, reconstruction and developmental aid. PRTs are intended to help build Afghan institutional capacity[23], a daunting task in a country traditionally devoid of centralised government control.

PRTs will be tailored in size and composition depending on local conditions and needs. Non-governmental agencies will be fully represented, or, if they remain independent, at least be linked for coordination, flexibility and efficiency reasons. The military size and composition will depend upon the prevailing security situation. It is not the current intention to operate a PRT in the capital as Kabul is well served by a large and reasonably active national government, which,

while lacking resources and expertise, is ably supported by the various international community diplomats (a Kabul growth industry), the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), a plethora of NGOs and the US and NATO led military. To facilitate cooperation, initial PRT locations were deliberately chosen to be co-located (in the same area rather than the same building) with existing United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) regional offices.

SECURITY – THE PRIMARY MILITARY ROLE

> 'What's the first thing in the world you need for anything else to happen, for hospitals to happen, roads to happen, for refugees to come back, for people to be fed and humanitarian workers to come to the country? You've got to have security.'

— Defense Secretary Rumsfeldt[24]

During Transition Operations, the main role of the military will always be the provision of security. PRTs have particular problems in maintaining security due to their small size, lack of combat power and the isolated environment in which they operate. How then, can they effectively fulfil this function? There are many aspects of security such as national security, force protection and the provision of a safe and secure environment. None of these are easy to achieve and each overlaps to some extent. .

National security should refer to security of the state to be rebuilt against outside aggression. In its purest form it will mean deterring cross border aggression by a neighbours military. The situation becomes far more difficult when the threat to the nation comes not from conventional forces but from guerrilla or terrorist groups, probably acting with the acquiescence or collusion of some proportion of the indigenous population. A further complication exists if national borders are indistinct or disputed, or if the tribal makeup of the local population has led to free cross border travel being the norm[25]. These last conditions are likely to exist in the kind of failed state that will most obviously be a target for regime change, and thus Nation Building.

Force protection is another important facet of security. Many aspects of the efforts to provide adequate security to the force will go unnoticed to the majority of the population. In particular, intelligence and surveillance activities will be largely covert. Physical security measures and incident response tactics are more problematic in that they have a much greater tendency to alienate the population, distancing the force from them. Paradoxically, these are the very people who need to be engaged to further Nation Building efforts and who could,

themselves, be useful elements of the force protection system[26]. Force protection is thus a particularly difficult problem for a PRT.

The provision of a safe and secure environment is an example of the complexities of the military role. A safe and secure environment is one in which the population are confident that they are able to live and work, educate their children and take part in legitimate political debate without the fear of intimidation and violence. It is also the condition that must be set for local law enforcement agencies to gain and maintain the confidence to operate effectively and independently. Equally, it allows NGOs and other experts to carry out there work in confidence and safety. This function often overlaps with other security roles. Though the description of this function is short, it is the single most important aspect of the militaries role in Nation Building for it is the catalyst for the population to focus on there own, there families and there communities regeneration, and for the various outside agencies to have the confidence to fulfil there roles in the wider Nation Building effort. General Kitson describes these operations as being '*to prevent the insurgents from disrupting the governments programme*.'[27] While his use of the term government is more accurate when describing the colonial actions he bases his theories on, its applicability to Nation Building operations is clear. He also notes that, '*the purpose of offensive operations is to identify and neutralize members of an insurgent organisation by apprehending them under conditions which enable them to be held in custody*.'[28] This wonderfully old-fashioned and very British phrasing stresses the need for counter-insurgency operations to be conducted within the rule of law[29].

Having commented on the need to operate within the rule of law, it is appropriate to note that security operations will eventually move from being a military task and will need to be integrated with indigenous and/or international police forces. At first this will be a matter of joint patrolling during operations planned and led by the military, with the police assuming some planning authority over time and, eventually, the military acting in support of the police, thus achieving police primacy. As an example, the British Army in Northern Ireland initially deployed in support of the police. They then assumed full control of security operations until a rejuvenated police force regained control. The Army mission statement has, for many years, contained the phrase, to '*maintain a safe and secure environment in support of the Royal Ulster Constabulary*'[30]. Therefore, while security is initially a predominantly military activity, there is a great requirement to liase and work with other security agencies.

Achieving the required security environment can be made easier if substantial military, police and indigenous forces are employed. While this is generally the case in Kabul where ISAF are much in evidence, it is not the case elsewhere in Afghanistan. The international

community, IGOs and NGOs and the nascent Afghan government have often called for a widening of the 'ISAF effect' beyond Kabul. These demands have never been matched by firm troop contributions, and even recent agreement to widen the ISAF mandate (now under NATO command) to all Afghanistan is more likely to merely mean transfer of responsibility for PRTs from the US to NATO rather than greater numbers of troops deployed.

So how can a PRT provide security? They try to do so by closely assessing local conditions, building relationship with local figures of influence – inevitably current or former 'warlords' – and using this relationship to 'head off' or 'defuse' current or potential problems. The final recourse is their 'reach-back' capability to call for reinforcements, air strikes or other help from Bagram airfield[31]. This can be a considerable distance and there are currently no plans to permanently forward base support for PRTs. As a result, this arrangement is communication and weather dependent. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the key factor in PRT security is a permissive environment at the local level. It can also be argued that in working to establish and maintain such an environment there is a real danger of a small military team becoming, or appearing to become, partial towards the main power broker in the area who may be the very man who is the obstacle to local progress and thus the target of much of the PRTs operation.

OTHER MILITARY TASKS

There are a number of roles associated with Nation Building that gravitate, at least initially, to the military. Most urgently, there will be a need to locate, control and eventually dispose of Weapons of Mass Destruction to ensure these weapons do not fall into the control of insurgents, terrorists or the agents of another power. The quick discovery of these weapons is also likely to be a political requirement linked to maintaining public and international support for operations, thus legitimising them. As part of the internationalising of this effort, it is probable that non-military agencies, predominantly the United Nations backed International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA), will be closely involved in the process. While not currently a significant role in Afghanistan, the PRT could work with IAEA staff.

There may be grounds for charging members of the deposed regime with war crimes or other crimes against international law or there own countries penal code. The detention of these persons denies them the ability to plan or lead any insurgency, and ensures that they are protected from revenge perpetrated by the local population. This is important as they may well have valuable intelligence information, and a public trial is less likely to turn them into martyrs than would arbitrary non-judicial punishment. These operations will again serve to legitimise the

actions of the coalition, particularly if an international court issues indictments, as occurred in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The dangers posed to a PRT engaged in such activity is clear, particularly as the most probable target is the ubiquitous local 'warlord'! The danger is only marginally tempered if troops unconnected with the team conduct the operations.

A result of regime change operations will probably be a requirement to form a new national army. How much of the existing military can be retained will be dependant on there level of professionalism. In many cases, basic soldiering ability is not the real issue. The pressing need is to re-educate the force, putting a premium on training in the rule of law, the laws of war, and the primacy of the legitimate government. Inevitably, this means that even in cases where the main structure of the former army is sound and reusable, there will be a disproportionate number of officers that need replacing, as it is this class that tends to be most loyal to the old regime. A PRT could be involved in basic training tasks, though it will be more usual to centralise the activity to achieve commonality and economy of scale. The PRT will be able to provide guidance and monitoring – 'quality control' – of the trained force, in this case the Afghan National Army (ANA), when it is employed in the PRT area of responsibility. Further, the team could provide stand-alone training in subjects such as first aid and communications, with the added benefit of improving interaction with these forces. Over time, military training may well be contractorised[32]. The PRT will be able to monitor the contractor's performance.

While some of the existing military forces may be retained, it is probable that a number will no longer be required. Failing states historically maintain disproportionately large armed forces used more for internal control than national defence. Other reasons to reduce the size of the armed forces could be a preponderance of poorly trained militia, or guerrilla forces, or the presence of willing or unwilling child soldiers[33]. The process of dealing with these groups has become known as Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR). This is another area that can fall to the military, but it does not need to do so. The PRT will be well placed to help run, organise or assist a DDR coordination centre. In the disarming phase, they may know where remaining military formations are located, and may have intelligence as to where arms are stored. They will be capable of organising and controlling assembly areas and providing basic processing and accounting. The will be able to ensure that intelligence is gathered and persons suspected of committing war crimes are detained. They will be able to process large numbers of weapons, destroying them or utilising them for the new army as required. In all this, the PRT will have to gauge local attitudes carefully as the demobilising troops will, inevitably, constitute much the power base of the local leader.

The military are not the best-qualified agency to complete the demobilisation and reintegration phases. In these phases there will be a need for counselling, social and vocational skills training and, of great importance, the provision of a sustainable alternative livelihood. Basic education will be a need, particularly for former child soldiers[34]. Experts best provide these requirements, and these will probably come from IGOs and NGOs. The inclusion of these agencies under the umbrella of the PRT is logical and synergistic. Success in this phase is essential to lay the foundation for a stable future, and to reduce the chance of the participants in the programme becoming a focus for a future insurgency. Within Afghanistan, the lead agency for DDR is UNAMA with Japanese funding.

Demining is a requirement that may initially be a military lead, and it may be considered as a sub-set of provision of a safe and secure environment, and of force protection. Mine removal will allow civilian freedom of movement, and therefore help galvanise the local economy. Equally, demining, particularly in and around locations occupied by the military, aids own freedom of movement and is essential to force protection. However, this is another area that requires close co-operation with other agencies and organisations, many of them charitable, which are focussed on this activity. The use of these organisations has many advantages in terms of unfixing military forces and it also provides a short to medium term employment opportunity for the local population[35]. PRTs are well placed to work effectively with these organisations.

A PRT will face particular problems in the area of intelligence. The interagency, non-military and possibly multi-national nature of the teams makes provision of US intelligence problematic, as does the chain of command in which PRTs are subordinated to the Civil Military Operations Task Force. Non US led PRTs such as the British, New Zealand and German teams already in existence will complicate the issue. Gathering intelligence is a further problem. Offensive action based on PRT provided intelligence might, at best, damage local relations with Afghan or NGOs. At worst, it could place the PRT in serious danger.

Aligned with the problem of how best to pass and receive intelligence is the problem of how the PRT interacts with coalition, NATO or ANA forces conducting offensive operations within the PRT area of operations. Clearly, these operations could be very damaging to the operations of the PRT and there is a need to establish who has primacy in a PRT area. In practical terms, it is difficult to see coalition forces subordinated to a PRT and therefore a robust coordination mechanism needs to be in place.

WORKING WITH NGOS

> 'No one serving as a soldier gets involved with civilians – he wants to please his commanding officer.'

— Paul, 2nd Timothy 2:4

In theory, once the military provide the safe and secure environment, other indigenous, national and international bodies will be able to fulfil their roles. In practice, predictably, it is not so simple. In this respect, military organisations are victims of their own ethos of getting things done. It is anathema to a military leader to sit idle if a task has been identified, and a common value of a professional soldier is his ability to transition from war-fighter to peacekeeper, recognizing the needs of civilians, and wishing to help. Therefore, the military inevitably become embroiled in aspects of Nation Building while still developing the security situation. Much of the early work required will be physical reconstruction of infrastructure, particularly essential utilities, hospitals and schools.

This response to basic human needs can be the first point at which the military can face a conflict of interests with other agencies, particularly NGOs[36], and, to a lesser extent, IGOs[37]. These organisations have often been involved in the theatre of operations for a considerable time, often years. Therefore, they will have a view as to whether the restitution of electrical power has, unwittingly, favoured a particular ethnic or religious group. They may not approve of a school being opened in an area where they have been trying to induce a local leader to adopt less discriminatory policies towards education for females. They will have a view as to which hospitals or doctors are most likely to ensure scarce medical supplies are used to best effect. Equally, they will not always be right, and they may be operating to there own personal or institutionally driven agenda.

NGOs and IGOs are a fact of life in an operational area and they should be a factor in military planning. The military too often assume that they operate in a vacuum that is filled by NGOs and IGOs sometime after 'peace has broken out'. The jaundiced military view is that 'they' will not operate while there is a risk to them, 'they' will resent the military filling tasks they feel are within their purview, and as a result 'they' will not cooperate with military reconstruction tasks. The NGO view will often be that military forces fail to appreciate the subtlety of a situation, they are 'Johnny come lately', have a tendency to tackle effect rather than cause, use reconstruction as a ploy to gain actionable intelligence, and resort to quick fix reconstruction efforts rather than the provision of security. They will have concerns over the militarisation of the provision of humanitarian aid[38]. Finally, they will often have a fear that overtly working with,

or even cooperating with, the military may result in them becoming targets for insurgent groups. The reality is that there are strong elements of truth in both views. This potential conflict of interests can bring into question the command arrangements of the PRT. As the PRT exists to act as a focus for better integration of the various elements involved with Nation Building, of which the military are just one, is a PRT best commanded by a soldier, or by a civilian with a diplomatic or humanitarian aid background? The UK PRT based in Mazar-e-Sharif tries to get around this by stressing that the military commander is merely 'first among equals' with the other agencies[39].

The PRT will need to be able to work with IGOs and NGOs if they are to make best use of the knowledge and experience level within the various agencies. For security and neutrality reasons, it may be that the military have to accept that the relationship needs to be subtle. If this can be achieved, a worthwhile working relationship can be realised with the NGOs becoming associates of the military, if not outright partners.

Though the relationship building between military and NGOs tends to take place in the theatre of operations, the expertise residing in the civilian organisation should be incorporated into military planning at an early stage where the benefits would outweigh the inevitable operational security and funding issues. US Central Command, located in Tampa, had an *ad hoc* arrangement to have an embedded NGO liaison officer for a period of initial operations in Afghanistan[40], and there may be value in this being formalised.

While this section has concentrated on relations with NGOs, it should be noted that, in principle, the same points apply to working with IGOs. For example a UN administration may well be more aligned with NGOs than with the military[41].

URGENCY, CONTRACTS AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

The urgent need to get essential services restored in order to save or preserve life and to provide basic utilities is clear, as is the need to balance these efforts with the work of IGOs and NGOs. Equally, the need to move work to the private sector – 'contracting out' – is well recognised as a device to free up scarce military resources for employment elsewhere. However, there are many benefits of this that are not always fully recognised. Contracting out will inject capital into the economy, due to staff living in the area, some supplies being bought locally, sub-contracting work and attracting other investors. They also employ and train local workers, giving them a skill for the future. Some of those employed will be ex-members of the security forces and this will complement the military supervised DDR programme.

A PRT can play a major part in this process through the provision of expert military engineering advice where needed[42], and by identifying need, and ensuring contracts are let that will have most benefit. In doing this they may consult with, and represent the views of, the NGOs. There are occasions where military construction tasks can have Nation Building benefits if local resources are fully utilised. An example is the construction of the British barracks in Kabul. The options for housing British soldiers were tents or a modular, imported camp as used in the Balkans. Royal Engineers determined that a brick built camp could be produced at less cost. This became the largest construction project in Kabul. Many local men were contracted and trained in construction by a very small number of Sappers [43]. Almost all materials were local bought, thus stimulating the economy, and when British forces withdraw they will leave behind a building destined to become the agricultural college. The local men have learned a skill and are continuing to work as builders, now a major industry in Kabul. British prestige was raised as possessing the finest camp in Kabul, and, of no small significance, Camp Souter[44] cost the British taxpayer one third of the projected price for a modular camp[45].

JACK OF ALL TRADES

There is often a requirement for the military to work in areas of civil law and order other than security tasking. This will include training police and prison staff, filling police functions and helping to reform the penal and judicial systems. However, it is clear that this is not really a military task and it is best given to expert help as quickly as possible. A PRT is well placed to cooperate in organising or facilitating training initiatives in their areas of operation. The PRT is also suitable as an administrative umbrella organisation for international police experts and trainers. As police training in Afghanistan is a German led activity this may broaden the multinational make-up of the teams. The reformation of the judiciary is an area for expert help as soon as practicable. An additional problem here is that there are subtle religious and constitutional nuances that need to be respected in order, as Kitson would put it, to be seen as operating within the law[46]. In Afghanistan, judicial reform is an Italian led initiative.

A facet of Nation Building is the regeneration of governance and civil administration - what Bildt calls 'State Building'. This may include help and guidance in writing a new constitution, and in having it accepted.   This will be conducted at central government level and will not directly involve the PRT though initiatives will be needed to help develop functioning local governance. Non-military PRT members, possibly from the State Department or an International body can lead in this. This is a delicate issue when operating in a Muslim country where issues of Sharia[47] law are present. Linked with this will be the training of a professional

civil service, and the planning, preparation, execution and supervision of elections. In all these cases the specialised skills and experience needed for these tasks is not likely to reside in the military.

Goodson describes these multiple challenges of Nation Building in a paragraph that has relevance to any Nation Building activity[48]:

> 'The Transitional Authority faces three interrelated, simultaneous, and major challenges,……... First, the Karzai government must create a new political structure that balances local and central governments, accommodates political parties, and re-establishes functioning governmental institutions. Second, it must secure the country and protect all its citizens by demobilising existing militias and creating a national army and police force behind a shield of furnished by international peacekeeping forces. Finally, …(they) must create the foundations for reviving the moribund economy of a country that was never highly developed in the first place, primarily through management of a massive and multifaceted economic reconstruction effort'.

Again, it is stressed that it is the provision of a safe and secure environment within which these activities can flourish that is vital. Nation Building will not move to fruition unless other government agencies, IGOs and NGOs are engaged, encouraged and assisted, initially by the military, so that they can take on these long-term commitments. The PRTs can play a major part in this at local level though the inevitable imbalance between the desired end state of a stable democratic society, and the historical balance of power and social structure, will always be present. Here, Goodson sounds another warning[49]:

> 'As sweeping as the reconstruction needs are, it is important that the goals remain largely restorational. Efforts at profound transformation will meet resistance based in Afghanistan's traditional culture. Assistance must also foster institutional capacity and not merely flow to projects that suit donor needs but in the process disrupt the local economy'.

WHAT WOULD CLAUSEWITZIAN THINK?

Though the GWOT has immersed coalition forces in a complicated situation, the oft-maligned Carl Von Clausewitz would understand it. His most famous, certainly most quoted (and misquoted), thesis was that war is *, 'simply the continuation of policy with the admixture of other means*[50]. Nation Building is clearly a mix of policy and other means. In Afghanistan, the best 'way' of achieving the required 'end' is international, diplomatic, military, interagency and NGO cooperation. Among the 'means' of synthesising this cooperation at the local level is the PRT.

However, it is also clear that the first step to achieving a more all-inclusive approach to Nation Building involving the US is clear and unambiguous Presidential direction. The desired

effect would be to focus, direct, galvanise and properly resource the interagency process, and allocate responsibilities and priorities for regime change and Nation Building.

CONCLUSION

The practicality of waging a comprehensive War On Terrorism has overcome administration and military objections to involvement in Nation Building. While it is clear that the military are pre-eminent when planning for and engaged in decisive operations, it is equally clear that the subsequent need to Nation Build must effectively utilise all the available organs of power. Within Afghanistan, PRTs are the catalyst for multi-facetted solutions to the need to strengthen the reach of the Afghan government[51]. PRTs have clearly succeeded in building trust at the local level, identifying need and bringing together resources and interested parties in order to resolve issues. In this, small size has paid benefits by ensuring that an engagement-focussed approach allied with a deft touch has been adopted. Conversely, PRTs have, in some instances, lacked a full range of abilities due to a lack of interagency or other organisational 'buy in,' restricting the team's ability to 'deliver'. The main determinant of a PRTs viability is its ability to convince all interested parties that the environment is safe and secure. The configuration of the teams makes this difficult to accomplishment in all but a benign environment and lack of combat power may restrict the PRT commander's ability to enforce compliance if he needs too. Therefore the PRT relies on maintaining a large measure of consent at the local level.

Thus, whether the PRT concept can be successfully applied elsewhere in the way it is in Afghanistan depends almost entirely on the prevailing security situation. What is abundantly clear is that the key priority in any Nation Building endeavour is, and will remain, the provision of a safe and secure environment, and that the number of troops committed to achieve the environment is a major factor.

WORD COUNT= 6000

ENDNOTES

[1] Andrea Frazer. 'Treading a Fine Line.' *Soldier Magazine* (February 2004): 28. Maj Bennett is the Chief of Staff of the UK led PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif.

[2] Remarked during the 1st Presidential debate of the 2000 campaign on 3 October 2000, at the University of Massachusetts, Boston MA.

[3] William J. Clinton, *The Clinton Administration's Policy on Managing Complex Contingency Operations: Presidential Decision Directive – 56* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 1997). Presidential Decision Directive 56 (PDD 56) was cancelled on 1 March 2001 by the first National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) of the George W bush administration (NSPD 1). NSPD 1 is due to be replaced by NSPD XX, which has been in draft form for some considerable time.

[4] William J. *Clinton. The Clinton Administration's Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations: Presidential Decision Directive – 25* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 1994).

[5] James A Schear, 'Peacekeeping Policy: The Defense Department View' *. Foreign Policy Agenda Electronic Journal, Vol 3, No 2,* April 1998. Available from http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0498/ijpe/pj28sche.htm : Internet: Accessed 23 September 2003.

[6] Woodward, 192. Nina M Serafino. *Peacekeeping: Issues of US Military Involvement.* Washington DC: The Library of Congress. (August 2003): 3.

[7] George W Bush. *'The National Security Strategy of the United States of America'.'* Washington DC: The White House, September 2002.

[8] The US principles of war call for Economy of Force to be used. The Powell doctrine espouses the use of massive, even excessive, force.

[9] Conventional military wisdom is that, to attack, a force of three times the strength of the defender is required.

[10] Remarked during the 2nd Presidential debate of the 2000 campaign on 11October 2000, at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC.

[11] Frederick W Kagan. 'War and Aftermath'. *Policy Review* (July – August 2003): 18.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Sen Torricelli, The New York Times (1 April 2002). In the same article, Sen Torricelli commented that he believed that President Bush must regret having commented, during his election campaign that the US should not be in the business of nation building.

[14] Department of Defense Operational Update Briefing, 25 March 2002.

[15] The use of sporting similes to describe military activities is increasingly popular. In the US, 'hand off' is universally recognised as a football term to describe a voluntary pass of the ball

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from one player to another. In the UK, Australia, New Zealand and many other nations, 'hand off' is a rugby term to describe a violent action taken by the ball carrier to prevent another player from taking the ball from him. As such, it is retaining, rather than giving up, a function or activity. One more example of 2 nations divided by a common language!

[16] Minxi Pei and Sara Kasper. *Lessons From the Past: The American Record on Nation Building.* Carnegie Endowment Policy Brief (May 2003).

[17] Peter Maass. 'Professor Nagl's War'. *The New York Times Magazine* (January 11 2004): 1.

[18] Colonel C E Callwell. *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (His Majesty's Stationary Office 1906).

[19] General Sir Frank Kitson. *Bunch of Five* (Faber and Faber 1977). Kitson draws his experience from Kenya, Malaya, Muscat and Oman and Cyprus. He later held command appointments in Northern Ireland where he applied his theories with great success.

[20] Kitson, 284-289.

[21] Carl Bildt in an interview for the British Broadcasting Corporation, January 18 2004.

[22] William Flavin. 'Planning for Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Success'. *Parameters* (Autumn 2003): 96.

[23] Department of Defence PRT brief, (January 2004), slide 3 and, Combined Joint Civil Military Operations Task Force. Briefing paper, *PRT Concept* (3 January 2003).

[24] Secretary Rumsfeldt and General Myers, Defense Department Operational Update, 28 March 2002.

[25] This state of affairs has been the norm in Afghanistan, particularly along the Pakistan border. Baluchistan, a southern Afghan province, is a portion of a Baluchistan that spreads across the Afghan, Iranian and Pakistan border and the area has, at various times in history, been independent, autonomous and is now divided. None of these classifications has made any practical difference on the ground.

[26] To take three examples of this: US personal force protection measures dictate that troops move in full battle order, usually in vehicles, with heavy weapons very prominent. As a result, the local population in both Afghanistan and Iraq may be intimidated and discouraged from approaching the troops. Clearly, this is exactly the result that is intended. In contrast, some other nations troops patrol in soft hats and without body armour, usually on foot. As a result, the population is more often engaged in conversation, the people do not feel as if being spoken too is singling them out and they are more likely to pass useful intelligence. The troops also have the opportunity to develop a better feel for the pattern of life within the area they operate in. In pre deployment training, British troops are trained to follow the mantra 'The absence of the normal, the presence of the abnormal,' as pre attack combat indicators. For this to be effective, the troops need a grasp of the local pattern of life. The treatment of locally engaged civilians within the base areas also differs. In the UK Camp Souter in Kabul, Afghan cleaners, kitchen hands and labourers are searched on entering and leaving camp. They are then free to get on

with the job of work, for which they are employed, fed in the same cookhouse as the British troops and with the same food (albeit that they do eat after the troops). They are, of course, supervised, but they tend to feel part of the 'team' and they, and the local population from which they come, are keen to ensure no attack, threatening their livelihood, occurs on the base. In contrast, Afghans working for US forces at Bagram airfield to the north of Kabul are searched in, and then usually formed up in three ranks and marched from task to task, always under the watchful eye of armed and unfriendly guards. This apparent lack of any trust is also apparent in operations involving local troops. The reaction of troops after a contact is another interesting contrast. US troops use all the force at their disposal to react to an attack. This can include air and artillery, often involves armoured vehicles, and usually involves use of the full range of squad weapons available. While no doubt making a prospective attacker think twice, it is also clear that heavy handed responses are a major source of dissatisfaction to that portion of the population that are not involved in the incident. The incident response training of British forces emphasises use of lethal force only against clearly identified attackers.

[27] Kitson, 293.

[28] Ibid, 296.

[29] Ibid, 289

[30] The Police Service of Northern Ireland has now replaced the Royal Ulster Constabulary as part of the arrangements in support of the Good Friday Agreement.

[31] Bagram airfield is located about 30 miles north of Kabul. It is the base for US led coalition operations in Afghanistan.

[32] There are numerous successful examples of contractorising military training. In recent times, this has been the case in the Balkans where Military Professional Resources Inc. has operated. Military training in Afghanistan is currently transitioning to a contractor base.

[33] Interestingly, the international community has defined child soldiers as those under 18 years of age. The school leaving age in the UK is 16 and, traditionally, the British Army recruits at this age, though under 18s are not allowed on combat operations. Thus, the UK is unable to ratify international treaties in this regard. While the USA has ratified the convention, they still enlist soldiers at 17 years of age, though not for combat operations.

[34] At the UN donors conference for Liberia of 7 Feb 04, the advocacy group Human Rights Watch urged donors to make a priority of funding basic elementary education for child soldiers in that country.

[35] The leading Non Governmental Organisation in this field is probably the British charity The HALO Trust. There website can be found at www.halotrust.org.

[36] Pamela Aall, Daniel Miltenberger and Thomas G. Weiss. *Guide to IGOs NGOs and the Military in Peace and Relief Operation* (United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000): 89. This handy pocket reference book defines a Non Governmental Organisation as '*a private, self-governing, not-for profit organisation dedicated to alleviating human suffering: and/or promoting health care, education, economic development, environmental protection, human rights, and*

conflict resolution; and/or encouraging the establishment of domestic institutions and civil society'. As an easy catch all, they can best be thought of as charities.

[37] Ibid, 5. An Inter Governmental Organisation exists where ' *two or more governments sign a multilateral treaty to form such a body and agree to finance its operations'.* Examples would include NATO, the UN and the OSCE.

[38] Barbara Stapleton, A *British Agencies Afghanistan Group Briefing Paper on the Development of Joint Regional Teams in Afghanistan* (The Refugee Council, January 2003): 29,32. President Karzai, the head of the Afghan Transitional Authority, subsequently expressed a concern that the name Joint Regional Team implied that the Regions had primacy rather than central government. As a result, in January 2003, the name was changed to *PRTs.*

[39] UK Permanent Joint Headquarters. *The UK's Northern Region Provincial Reconstruction Team*. Briefing Paper. 27 April 2003, slide 5.

[40] Douglas E. Mercado. *Report to InterAction on Activities, Observations and Recommendations of NGO Liaison to US Central Command* (InterAction NGO paper, July 2002). A liaison with a representative of InterAction was achieved for the first nine months of the operation. Inevitably, the key problems with making such a position more permanent are security, funding and the impartiality of the NGO representative.

[41] In this case, there is a distinction between a military organisation operating as a UN force under an appropriate mandate – so called Blue Berets – and a UN civil administration, such as UNAMA – the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan. The latter is typically staffed and led by career diplomats.

[42] Engineering capability is not envisaged as a core element of a PRT, but the team will have 'reach-back' to such experts as required.

[43] Sapper is a name for a British Royal Engineer derived from the days when trench-works and 'saps' were the major activity of the Corps.

[44] Camp Souter is named after Captain Souter of the 44th Regiment of Foot. Retreating from Kabul during the First Afghan War, the British Army suffered its worst disaster in the nineteenth century. On the 6th of January 1842, the British pulled out of Kabul. Under the command of Major General Elphinstone, 4 500 British and Indian troops, along with 12 000 camp followers left for Jalalabad. Along the way, the Afghans, who had previously offered the British safe passage if they were to leave Afghanistan, harassed the column with hit and run raids and sniper fire. The column suffered terrible losses until reaching Gandamak near the Jugdalak Pass, the last survivors, mainly from the 44th (East Essex), made a last stand. On the 13th of January 1842, the regiment was effectively wiped out. The only man taken prisoner was Captain Souter who had wrapped himself in the Regimental Colours in order to protect them. He was spared bring killed as the Afghans believed any man so garishly dressed must be worth ransoming! The doctor, William Brydon, was [the] only man who escaped. He became the sole survivor from an original muster of over 15 000 people. Dr Brydon's arrival at Jalalabad became the subject of Lady Butler's famous painting "The Remnants of an Army".

[45] In an interesting contrast, US troops at Bagram airfield are still, two years after arriving in Afghanistan, living in tents. It has not escaped the ironic attention of locals that the men whose

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President has several times said that the US will not desert Afghanistan are trying to remain in as temporary a profile as is possible!

[46] Kitson generally takes operating within the law as meaning the existing law of the country he is considering. Clearly, that can be more difficult in a failed state, though it is incumbent upon all involved to attempt to act in a way that is within the accepted bounds of decency - the 'legal norms' – of that country, and to act in strict compliance with international law. This issue should be carefully considered when approving Rules Of Engagement, and these rules should be reconsidered on moving into Phase IV – Transition.

[47] Sharia law is based on strict interpretation of Muslim teaching and the Koran. Therefore, it can be at odds with more liberal Western style legal and social norms.

[48] Larry Goodson. *Afghanistan's Long Road to Reconstruction* (Journal of Democracy, Vol 14, No 1. January 2003): 88.

[49] Goodson, 96.

[50] Carl Von Clausewitz. *On War*. (Ed and trans by Howard and Paret. Princeton University Press, 1976): 69, 605.

[51] Department of Defence PRT brief, slide 3.

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